

February 16, 1950.

Dr. Evelyn M. Witkin,
Dept. of Genetics,
Carnegie Institution,
Cold Spring Harbor, L.I., N.Y.

Dear Evelyn:

As you know, Frank Kennedy has applied for a research assistantship here. His academic record is indifferent, at best, and there is some question whether he can be admitted to the Graduate School, not to mention qualifying for an assistantship award. I would appreciate any detailed information that you can give me that might help our department to come to some decision about Kennedy, in particular whether his academic performance (about 1.5 on the basis of 3!) really represents his aptitudes. His personality is, of course, also important.

Re my note last week, have you ever tested formaldehyde? I'll be surprised if it is not mutagenic, but don't propose to test this myself. I checked desoxycholate on K-12, for killing, and find it much more resistant than your published curve on B. 5 hours, 5%, pH 7.7 gave only about 70% sterilization. By the way, solutions of an E&A as well as a BBL preparation of sodium desoxycholate, 5% in distilled water had a pH of 8.9, and had to be buffered heavily to reach 7.7. The killing was not much affected. The 7.7 solutions gelled heavily in the refrigerator, but redispersed on warming. I just mention these things to raise the probability that none of these preps. are very pure or consistent, which may account for some of the negative results.

I enclose a brief method note for MGB, which I'd just as soon you included anonymously, or by initial, as probably it may already be in use elsewhere. I hope to have a chance to mention some of the other work on bactericides, but am not sure. Anyhow, don't hold the presses!

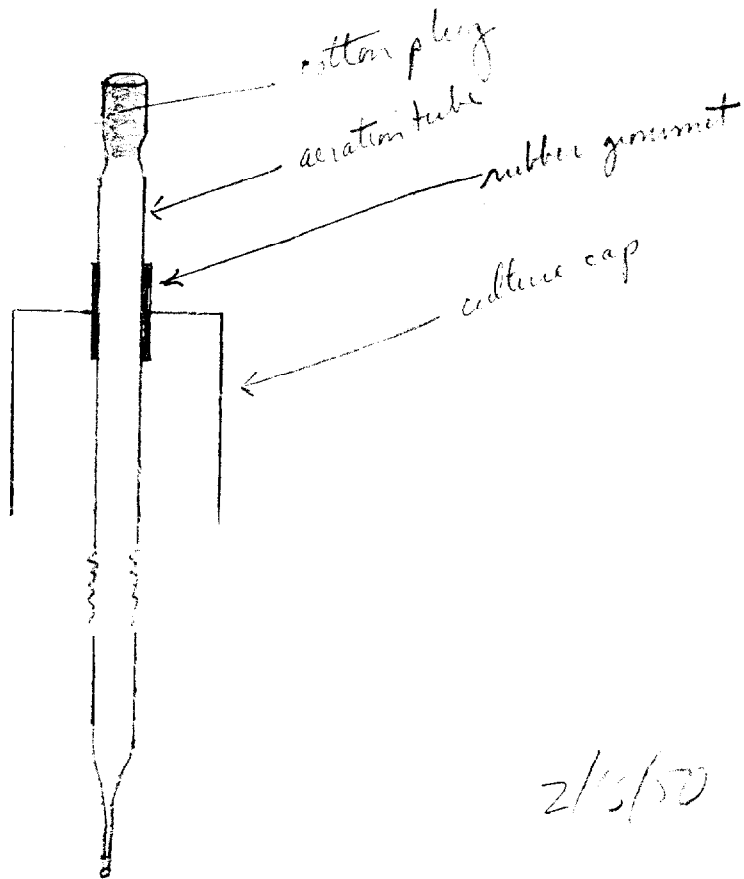
Sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg

AERATION OF BACTERIAL CULTURES:

The nuisance of rolling aerating tubes in cotton can be avoided with the help of aluminum culture caps (Supplied by Aloe Co.). $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch holes are drilled through the center of the cap, and reamed gently. The hole will take 4-mm. glass tubing, which can be held in place effectively with a grommet consisting of a $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch length of latex rubber tubing.

J. L.



2/15/50